

2 4 6 78

EPISTLES

OF

Swami Vivekananda.

FIFTH SERIES



Published from the Advaita Ashram, Mayavati,
Lohaghat P. O., Almora Dt., Himalayas.

1918

All rights reserved.

[Price Six Annas.

R M I C LIBRARY	
Acc. No.	24678
Class No.	294.581 VIV
Date	
St.	
Class	✓
Cat.	✓
Bk. Card	✓
Checked	ad

PRINTED BY MOHAN LAL SAI CHOWDHAR

AT THE

PRABUDDHA BHARATA PRESS, MAYAVATI



EPISTLES

(TRANSLATED FROM BENGALI.)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna.

Ghazipur,
February, 1890.

Beloved Akhandananda,

Very glad to receive your letter. What you have written about Thibet is very promising, and I shall try to go there once. In Sanskrit Thibet is called the *Uttarakuruvarsha*, and is not a land of *Mlechchhas*. Being the highest tableland in the world it is extremely cold, but by degrees one may become accustomed to it. Of the manners and customs of the Thibetans you have written nothing; why, if they are so hospitable, did they not allow you to go on? Please write everything in detail, in a long letter. I am sorry to learn that you will not be able to come, for I had a great longing to see you. It seems that I love you more than all others. However, I shall try to get rid of this Maya too,

The Tantric rites among the Thibetans that you have spoken of, arose in India itself, during the

decline of Buddhism. It is my belief that the Tantras in vogue amongst us, were the creation of the Buddhists themselves. Those Tantric rites are even more dreadful than our doctrine of *Vāmāchāra*; for in them adultery had got a free rein, and it was only when the Buddhists became demoralised through immorality, that they were driven away by Kumarila Bhatta. As some Sannyasins speak of Sankara, and the *Bhāṭṭas* of Sri Chaitanya, that he was in secret an Epicure, a drunkard and one addicted to all sorts of abominable practices,—so the modern Tantric Buddhists speak of the Lord Buddha as a dire *Vāmāchārin*, and give an obscene interpretation to the many beautiful precepts of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, such as the *Tattvagāthā* and the like. The result of all this has been that the Buddhists are divided into two sects now-a-days; the Burmese and the Sinhalese have generally set the Tantras at naught, have likewise banished the Hindu Gods and Goddesses, and at the same time have thrown overboard the Amitābha Buddham held in regard among the Northern School of Buddhists. The long and short of it is that the Amitābha Buddha and the other gods whom the Northern School worship, are not mentioned in books like the *Prajñāpāramitā*, but a lot of gods and goddesses are recommended for worship. And the Southern people have wilfully transgressed the Shastras and eschewed the gods and goddesses. The phase of Buddhism which declares 'Everything for others,' and which you find spread throughout

Thibet, has greatly struck modern Europe. Concerning that phase, however, I have a good deal to say—which it is impossible to do in this letter. What Buddha did was to break wide open the gates of that very religion which was confined in the Upanishads to a particular caste. What special greatness does his theory of Nirvána confer on him? His greatness lies in his unrivalled sympathy. The high orders of Samadhi etc., that lend gravity to his religion, are almost all there in the Vedas; what are absent there are his intellect and heart, which have never since been paralleled throughout the history of the world.

The Vedic doctrine of Karma is the same as in Judaism and all other religions, that is to say, the purification of the mind through sacrifices and such other external means,—and Buddha was the first man who stood against it. But the inner essence of the ideas remained as of old,—look at that doctrine of mental exercises which he preached, and that mandate of his to believe in the Suttas instead of the Vedas. Caste also remained as of old, (caste was not wholly obsolete at the time of Buddha) but it was now determined by personal qualifications, and those that were not believers in his religion were declared as heretics, all in the old style. "Heretic" was a very ancient word with the Buddhists, but then they never had recourse to the sword (good souls!) and had great toleration. Argument blew up the Vedas, but what is the proof of your religion?—Well, put faith in it!—the

same procedure as in all religions. It was however an imperative necessity of the times and that was the reason of his having incarnated himself. His doctrine is like that of Kapila. But that of Sankara, how far more grand and rational! Buddha and Kapila are always saying,—the world is full of grief and nothing but that,—flee from it—aye, for your life, do! Is happiness altogether absent here? It is a statement of the nature of what the Brahmos say—the world is full of happiness! There is grief, forsooth, but what can be done? Perchance some will suggest that grief itself will appear as happiness when you become used to it by constant sufferance. Sankara does not take this line of argument,—he says this world *is and is not—manifest* yet *one*, I shall unravel its mystery—I shall know whether grief be there, or anything else; I do not flee from it as from a bugbear. I will know all about it—as to the infinite pain that attends its search, well, I am embracing it in its fullest measure. Am I a beast that you frighten me with happiness and misery, decay and death, which are but the outcome of the senses? I will know about it—will give up my life for it. There is nothing to know about in this world—therefore, if there be anything beyond this relative existence—what the Lord Buddha has designated as *Prajñāpāram*—the transcendental—if such there be, I want that alone. Whether happiness attends it or grief, I do not care. What a lofty idea! How grand! The religion of Buddha has reared itself on the Upanishads, and

upon that also the philosophy of Sankara. Only, Sankara had not the slightest bit of Buddha's wonderful heart, dry intellect merely—for fear of the Tantras, for fear of the mob, in his attempt to cure a boil he amputated the very arm itself.* One has to write a big volume if one has to write about them at all—but I have neither the learning nor the leisure for it.

Lord Buddha is my Ishtam—my God. He preached no theory about Godhead—he was himself God, I fully believe it. But no one has the power to put a limit to God's infinite glory. No, not even God Himself has the power to make Himself limited. The translation of the *Gandāra-Sutta* that you have made from the *Suttanipāṭa*, is excellent. In that book there is another *Sutta*—the *Dhāniya Sutta*—which has got a similar idea. There are many passages in the *Dhammapadam* too, with similar ideas. But that is verily to be the last stage,

ज्ञानविज्ञानसुखात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः

* In his anxiety to defend the purity of the Vedic religion against the excesses of Tantrikism, which was capturing the rank and file of his countrymen, Sankara neglected the problem of the latter, stigmatised as Sudras by the Vedicists. This is perhaps the meaning of Swamiji. It seems he could never forgive Sankara for applying in his commentary on the Brahmasutras the old logic of forbidding Vedic rituals to the Sudras, to the more modern question of their right to higher modes of worship (Upāsana) and knowledge (Jñāna) of the Jñānakāṇḍa.

—when one has got perfectly satisfied with Knowledge and Realisation, who is the same under all circumstances, and has gained mastery over his senses—who has not the least regard for his body as something to be taken care of,—it is he who may roam about at pleasure like the mad elephant caring for naught. Whereas a puny creature like myself should practise devotion, sitting at one spot, till he attains Realisation,—and then only should he behave like that—but it is a far-off question—very far indeed.

चिन्ताशून्यमदैन्यमैक्यमशनं पानं सरिद्धारिषु
स्वातन्त्र्येण निरङ्कुशा स्थितिरभीर्निष्ठा शमयाने वने ।
वस्त्रं क्षालनशोषणादिरहितं दिग्वास्तु शय्या मही
सञ्चारो निगमान्तवीथीषु विवां क्रीडा परे ब्रह्मणि ॥

विमानमालम्ब्य शरीरमेतद्-
भुनक्त्यशेषात् विषयानुपस्थितान् ।
परेच्छया बालवदात्मवेत्ता
योऽप्यन्तलिङ्गोऽननुषक्तबाह्यः ॥

दिगम्बरो वापि च साम्बरो वा
स्वगम्बरो वापि चिदम्बरस्थः ।
उन्मत्तवद्वापि च बालवद्वा
पिशाचवद्वापि चरत्यवन्ध्याम् ॥ *

—To a knower of Brahman food comes of itself, without effort—he drinks water wherever he gets it. He roams at pleasure everywhere—he is fearless,

* Vivekachūḍāmaṇi.

sleeps sometimes in the forest, sometimes in a crematorium, and treads the Path which the Vedas have taken but whose end they have not seen. His body is like the sky, and he is guided, like a child, by others' wishes; he is sometimes naked, sometimes in gorgeous clothes, and at times has only Jnanam as his clothing; he behaves sometimes like a child, sometimes like a madman, and at other times again like a ghoul, indifferent to cleanliness.

I pray to the holy Feet of our Guru that you may have that state, and you may wander like the rhinoceros.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna.

Ghazipur,
March, 1890.

Beloved Akhandananda,

Very glad to receive your letter yesterday. I am at present staying with the wonderful Yogi and devotee of this place, called Pavhariji. He never comes out of his room—and holds conversations with people from behind the door. Inside the room there is a pit in which he lives. It is rumoured that he remains in a state of Samadhi for months together. His fortitude is most wonderful. Our Bengal is the land of Bhakti and of Jnana, where

Yoga is scarcely so much as talked of even. What little there is, is but the queer breathing exercises of the *Hathayoga*—which is nothing but a kind of gymnastics. Therefore I am staying with this wonderful *Raja-yogin*—and he has given me some hopes, too. There is a beautiful Bungalow in a small garden belonging to a gentleman here; I mean to stay there. The garden is quite close to Babaji's cottage. A brother of the Babaji stays there to look after the comforts of the Sadhus, and I shall have my *Bhikshû* at his place. Hence, with a view to see to the end of this fun I give up for the present my plan of going to the hills. For the last two months I have got an attack of Lumbago in the waist, which also makes it impossible to climb the hills now. Therefore let me wait and see what Babaji would give me.

My motto is to learn whatever good things I may come across anywhere. This leads many friends to think that it will take away from my devotion to the Guru. These ideas I count as those of lunatics and bigots. For all Gurus are one, and are fragments and radiations of God, the Universal Guru.

If you come to Ghazipur you have but to enquire at Satis Babu's or Gagan Babu's at Gorabazar, and you will know my whereabouts. Or, Pavhari Baba is so well-known a person here, that everyone will inform you about his Ashrama at the very mention of his name, and you have only to go there and enquire about the Paramahansa, and

they will tell you of me. Down Moghul Sarai there is a station named Dildarnagar, where you have to change to a short Branch Railway and get down at Tarighat, opposite Ghazipur; then you have to cross the Ganges to reach Ghazipur.

For the present, I stay at Ghazipur for some days, and wait and see what the Babaji does. If you come, we shall stay together at the said Bungalow for sometime, and then start for the hills, or for any other place we may decide upon. Don't, please, write to anyone at Baranagore that I am staying at Ghazipur.

With blessings and best wishes,

Ever yours,

Vivekananda.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

Ghazipur,

March, 1890.

Beloved Akhandananda,

Received another letter of yours just now, and with great difficulty deciphered the scribblings. I have written everything in detail in my last letter. You start immediately on receipt of this. I know the route to Thibet via Nepal that you have spoken

of. As they don't allow anyone to enter Thibet easily, so they don't allow anybody to go anywhere in Nepal, except Katmandu, its capital, and one or two places of pilgrimage. But a friend of mine is now a tutor to His Highness the Maharaja of Nepal, and a teacher in his school, from whom I have it that when the Nepal Government send their subsidy to China, they send it via Lhassa. A Sadhu contrived in that way to go to Lhassa, China, Manchuria, and even to the *Pitha* (holy seat) of Tara Devi, in North China. We, too, can visit with dignity and respect Thibet, China, Lhassa, and all, if that friend of mine tries to arrange it. You therefore start immediately for Ghazipur. After a few days' stay here with the Babaji, I shall correspond with my friend, and everything arranged, I shall certainly go to Thibet via Nepal.

You have to get down at Dildarnagar to come to Ghazipur. It is three or four stations down Moghul Sarai. I would have sent you the passage if I could collect it here ; so you get it together and come. Gagan Babu—with whom I am putting up—is an exceedingly courteous, noble and generous-minded man. No sooner did he come to know of K.—'s illness, than he sent him the passage at Hrishikesh ; he has besides spent much on my account. Under the circumstances it would be violating a Sannyasin's duty to tax him for the passage to Kashmir, and I desist from it. You collect the fare and start as soon as you receive

this letter. Let the craze for visiting Amarnath be put back for the present.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna !

Ghazipur,
2nd April, 1890.

My dear K—

Glad to receive your letter as well as Pramada Babu's and B—'s. I am doing pretty well here. You have expressed a desire to see me. I too have a similar longing, and it is this that makes me afraid of going. Moreover, the Babaji forbids me to do so. I shall try to go on a few days' leave from him. But there is this fear that by so doing I shall be drawn up to the hills by the attraction I have for Hrishikesh, and it will be very difficult to shake it off, specially for one weak-minded, you see, like myself. The attack of lumbago, too, will not leave me on any account—a botheration! But then I am getting used to it. Please convey my countless salutations to Pramada Babu ; his is a friendship which greatly benefits both my mind and body. And I am particularly indebted to him. Things will turn up some way, anyhow.

With best wishes,
Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

*(Written to a Bengali lady-disciple, just before
proceeding to America.)*

Bombay,
24th May, 1893.

Dear mother,

Very glad to receive your letter and that of dear Haripada. Please be not sorry that I could not write to you very often. I am always praying to the Lord for your welfare. I cannot go to Belgaum now as arrangements are all ready for my starting for America on the 31st next. The Lord willing, I shall see you on returning from my travels in America and Europe. Always resign yourselves to Lord Sri Krishna. Always remember that we are but puppets in the Lord's hands. Remain pure always. Please take care not to become impure even in thought, as in speech and action; always try to do good to others as far as in you lies. And remember that the paramount duty of a woman is to serve her husband by thought, word and deed. Please read the Gita everyday to the best of your opportunity. Why have you signed yourself as.....*Dasi*? The Vaisya and the Sudra should sign as *Dasa* and *Dasi*, but the Brahmana and Kshatriya should write *Deva* and *Devi*. Moreover, these distinctions of caste and the like have been the invention of our modern sapient Brahmanas. Who is a servant, and to whom? Everyone is a servant of the Lord Hari. Hence a woman should use her patronymic, that is, the

surname of her husband. This is the ancient Vedic custom, as for example, such and such *Mitra*, or the like. It is needless to write much, dear Mother ; always know that I am constantly praying for your well-being. From America I shall now and then write to you letters with descriptions of the wonderful things there. I am now at Bombay, and shall stay here up to the 31st. The Private Secretary to the Maharaja of Khetri has come here to see me off.

With blessings,

Yours sincerely,

Vivekananda.

(*Written to Babu Haripada Mitra, Forest Officer,
Sholapur.*)

C/o George W. Hale,
541 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago.

Dear and Beloved,

Received your letter yesterday. I am delighted to find that you remember me. It is passing strange that the Chicago affairs have got their way into the Indian newspapers, for I try my best to keep my movements from getting publicity. There are many wonderful things in this country. Particularly, poverty is almost absent here, and nowhere have I seen women like those of this

country. There are plenty of good men in our country too, but we have very few women like those of this country. वा श्रीः स्वयं सुकुतीनां भवनेषु—The Goddess who is Herself present in the homes of the fortunate as Lakshmi—this is literally true. I have seen here women by the thousands who are white like the snow of this country. And how free they are! It is they who do everything. Schools and colleges are full of women. But in our unfortunate country women cannot walk out of doors with safety to their modesty. And how kind they are! Ever since I came here, the American women have been accommodating me in their homes and feeding me—they arrange everything for my lectures, take me to the shops with them,—in fact, I cannot say what help they do not render. I shall not be able to repay my debt of gratitude to them even if I serve them for hundreds of lives.

My son, do you know what the word *Sākta* means? It does not mean indulging in intoxicants like wine or *bhang*. It means one who knows God to be the Supreme Power immanent in the universe, and sees the manifestation of the Supreme Power throughout womankind. The Americans see like that. And our Manu has said, यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते सन्त्यन्ते तत्र देवताः—Where women are held in esteem, there the gods are delighted,—upon that family God showers His blessings. That is what these people do. And therefore they are happy, learned, free and energetic. We, on the other hand, look upon women as low, degraded, despicable and

impure. And the result is that we are beasts, slaves, devoid of energy, and poor.

Oh, what shall I say of the wealth of this country! There is no other nation on earth so wealthy as these people. True, that the English also are rich, but they have got lots of poor men also. You can scarcely find a poor man here. You have to pay rupees six per day, besides food and clothing, if you want to have a servant. In England it is one rupee per diem. A coolie would not work below six rupees a day. But the expenses are proportionate, too. You cannot get a common cigar for less than four annas. A lasting pair of shoes costs you Rs. 24. As are their earnings, so are their spendings. But they are as ready to spend as to earn.

And how pure are their women! None are married below the age of twenty-five or thirty. And they are free like the birds of the air. Marketing, getting a living, managing shops, attending colleges, doing the Professor's work,—everything they do, yet how pure! Those that are rich are day and night busy helping the poor. And what do we do? Our girls must be married at the age of eleven, or they will become corrupt! Are we men, my dear? Manu says, कन्याप्येवं पालनीया शिक्षणीयातिथ्यन्तः—The daughter too should be thus brought up and educated with the utmost care. As the boys will have to live a Brahmacharin's life up to the thirtieth year and have education, so shall the girls also have to do. But what are we doing? Can you

raise the status of your women? Then there is some hope. Otherwise your beastly existence will never be at an end.

Next come the poor. If, in our country, anyone is born in a low caste, there! he has no more chances, he is gone. Why, forsooth? What an oppression! In this country everyone has hopes, has something to stand upon, has opportunities. He who is poor to-day, will to-morrow be rich, be learned, and will be honoured by the whole world. And all are eager to help the poor. The Indian has the average monthly income of Rs. 2. In India they are all crying that they are desperately poor, but how many societies are there to help the poor? How many men are weeping in their hearts for the destitute millions? Good God! Are we men! The *Hâdis* and *Dôms* and other classes who are leading their beastly existences around your homes,—can you tell me what you have done to improve their condition, to give them a morsel of food? You do not touch them, always keep them at arm's length, with the most unkind treatment. Are we men! And those thousands of Sadhus and Brahmins whom you find sauntering amongst you, what are they doing for these degraded, poor, and down-trodden masses? Simply saying, don't touch me, don't touch me! To what a degraded state have they reduced the Religion Eternal! Where is religion now? Only don't-touchism,—don't touch me, don't touch me—that is all!

I have come to this country not for sight-

seeing, not for enjoying amusements, nor for making a name, but to find a way out for these poor. What that way is, you will come to know later on, if the Lord be propitious.

These people have got many weak points too. The long and short of it is that as regards religion they are far below us, but in social ideal they are far superior to us. We shall take up their social ideal and shall teach them our wonderful religion.

I do not know when I shall return home, the Lord's Will is paramount. Accept all of you my blessings.

Yours sincerely,
Vivekananda.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna !

C/o George W. Hale,
541, Dearborn Avenue,
Chicago.
19th March, 1894.

My dear——

I have not written to you since coming to this country. But Haridas Bhai's* letter gives me all the news. It is excellent that G. C. Ghose † and

* Haridas Bhai—Ex-Dewan of Junagarh. Shortly before Swamiji left India for America, he became intimately acquainted with this gentleman, and was introduced by him to many Indian princes.

† G. C. Ghose—the great actor-dramatist of Bengal, and a staunch devotee of Sri Ramakrishna.

all of you have treated him with due consideration.

I have no wants in this country, but mendicancy has no vogue here and I have to labour, that is, lecture in places. It is as cold here as it is hot. The summer is not a bit less hot than in Calcutta. And how to describe the cold in winter! The whole country is covered in snow, three or four feet deep, nay, six or seven feet, at places! In the Southern parts there is no snow. Snow, however, is a thing of little consideration here. For it snows when the mercury stands at 32° F. In Calcutta it scarcely comes down to 60° and it rarely approaches zero in England. But here, your mercury sinks to *minus* 40° or 50° . In Canada, in the North, mercury becomes condensed, when they have to use the alcohol thermometer. When it is too cold, that is, when the mercury stands even below 20° F. it does not snow. I used to think that it must be an exceedingly cold day on which the snow falls. But it is not so, it snows on comparatively warm days. Extreme cold produces a sort of intoxication. No carriages would run; only the sledge, which is without wheels, slides on the ground! Everything is frozen stiff—even an elephant can walk on rivers and canals and lakes. The massive Falls of Niagara, of such tremendous velocity, are frozen to marble!! But I am doing nicely. I was a little afraid at first, but later on, necessity makes me travel by rail to the borders of Canada one day, and the next day finds me lecturing in South America! The carriages are kept quite warm, like your own room,

by means of steam pipes, and all around are masses of snow, spotlessly white,—O the beauty of it !

I was mortally afraid that my nose and ears would fall off, but to this day they are all right. I have to go out, however, dressed in a heap of warm clothing, surmounted by a fur-coat, with boots, encased in an woollen jacket, and so on. No sooner you breathe out, than it freezes among the beard and moustache ! Notwithstanding all this, the fun of it is that they won't drink water indoors without putting a lump of ice into it. This is, because it is warm indoors. Every room and stair-case are kept warm by steam pipes. They are first and foremost in arts and appliances, foremost in enjoyment and luxury, foremost in making money, and foremost in spending it. The daily wages of a coolie are six rupees, as also are those of a servant ; you cannot hire a cab for less than three rupees, nor get a cigar for less than four annas. A decent pair of shoes costs twenty-four rupees, and a suit, rupees five hundred. As they earn, so they spend. A lecture fetches from two hundred up to three thousand rupees. I have got up to five hundred.† Of course now I am in the very heyday of fortune. They like me, and thousands of people come to hear me speak.

† For some time after the Chicago Address Swamiji lectured on behalf of a Lecture Bureau, which task, however, he soon gave up as curtailing his independence, and devoted most of the money thus earned to various charitable works in different parts of India.

So it pleased the Lord, I met here Mr. —. He was very cordial at first, but when the whole Chicago population began to flock to me in overwhelming numbers, then grew the canker in —'s mind!

* * * The priests tried their utmost to snub me. But the Guru is with me, what could anybody do? And the whole American nation loves and respects me, pays my expenses, and reveres me as a Guru.....It was not in the power of your priests to do anything against me. Moreover, they are a nation of scholars. Here it would no longer do to say, "We marry our widows," "we do not worship idols," and things of that sort. What they want is philosophy, learning, and empty talk will no more do.

D— is a nice boy. He has not much of learning, but is very gentle. He had a good deal of popularity in this country.

Brother, I have been brought to my senses.... "ये निष्कामि परहितं निरर्थकं ते के न जानीमहे।"—We do not know what sort of people they are, who for nothing hinder the welfare of others. (Bhartrihari) Brother, we can get rid of everything, but not of that cursed jealousy.....That is a national sin with us, speaking ill of others, and burning at heart at the greatness of others. Mine alone is the greatness, none else should rise to it!!

Nowhere in the world are women like those of this country. How pure, independent, self-relying and kind-hearted! It is the women who are the life and soul of this country. All learning and cul-

ture are centred in them. The saying "वा श्रीः स्वयं कुलतीक्ष्णं भवनेषु"—Who is the Goddess of Fortune Herself in the families of the meritorious—holds good in this country, while that other, "वायात्पत्न्यां हृदयेऽप्यलक्ष्मीः"—The Goddess of ill-luck in the hearts of the sinful—applies to ours. Just think on this. Great God! I am struck dumb with wonderment at seeing the women of America,—“त्वं श्रीस्त्वमीश्वरी त्वं ह्रीः” etc.—Thou art the Goddess of Fortune, Thou art the supreme Goddess, Thou art Modesty. “वा देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्तिरूपेण संस्थिता” etc.—The Goddess who resides in all beings as Power. All this holds good here. There are thousands of women here, whose minds are as pure and white as the snow of this country. And look at our girls, becoming mothers below their teens!! Good Lord! I now see it all. Brother, “वच नार्बस्तु पूज्यन्ते नश्वन्ते तत्र देवताः”—The gods are pleased where the women are held in esteem.—Says the old Manu. We are horrible sinners; and our degradation is due to our calling women ‘despicable worms,’ ‘gateways to Hell,’ and so forth. Goodness gracious! There is all the difference between heaven and hell!! “वायात्पत्न्यां हृदयेऽप्यलक्ष्मीः”—He adjudges gifts according to the merits of the case. Is the Lord to be hoodwinked by idle talk? The Lord has said, “त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी”—Thou art the woman, Thou art man, Thou art the boy and the girl as well. (Swetaswatara Upa.) And we on our part are crying, “दूरमपसर रे चण्डाल”—Be off, thou outcast! “कैनेषा निर्मिता नारी मोहिनी” &c.—Who has made the

bewitching woman? My brother, what experiences I have had in the South of the upper classes torturing the lower! What bacchanalian orgies within the temples! Is it a religion that fails to remove the misery of the poor and turn men into gods! Do you think our religion is worth the name? Ours is only Don't-touchism, only "Touch me not," "Touch me not." Good heavens! a country, the big leaders of which have for the last two thousand years been only discussing whether to take food with the right hand or the left, whether to take water from the righthand side or from the left,.....if such a country does not go to ruin what else will? "कालः सुप्तेषु जागर्ति कालो हि दुरतिक्रमः"—Time keeps wide awake when all else are asleep; Time is invincible indeed! He knows it; who is there to throw dust in His eyes, my friend?

A country where millions of people live on flowers of the *mohua* plant, and a million or two of Sadhus and a hundred million or so of Brahmins suck the blood out of these poor people, without even the least effort for their amelioration—is that a country or hell? Is that a religion, or the devil's dance? My brother, here is one thing for you to understand fully,—I have travelled all over India, and seen this country too—can there be an effect without cause? Can there be punishment without sin?

“सर्वशास्त्रपुराणेषु व्यासस्य वचनं ब्रुवं ।

वन्द्यकारस्तु पुण्यत्रय पापाय परपीडनम् ।”

—Amidst all the scriptures and Puranas, know

this statement of Vyasa to be true, that doing good to others conduces to merit, and doing harm to them leads to sin.

Isn't it true?

My brother, in view of all this, specially, of the poverty and ignorance, I got no sleep. At Cape Comorin sitting in Mother Kumari's temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock,—I hit upon a plan: We are so many Sannyasins wandering about, and teaching the people metaphysics,—it is all madness. Did not our Gurudeva use to say, 'An empty stomach is no good for religion'? That those poor people are leading the life of brutes, is simply due to ignorance. We have for all ages been sucking their blood and trampling them under foot.

* * Suppose some disinterested Sannyasins, bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education, and seeking in various ways to better the condition of all down to the Chandála, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes and such other accessories,—can't that bring forth good in time? All these plans I cannot write out in this short letter. The long and short of it is—if the mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must to the mountain. The poor are too poor to come to schools and *páthshálas*, and they will gain nothing by reading poetry and all that sort of thing. We as a nation have lost our individuality and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and

raise the masses. The Hindu, the Mahomedan, the Christian all have trampled them under foot. Again the force to raise them must come from inside, that is, from the orthodox Hindus. In every country the evils exist not with, but against, Religion. Religion therefore is not to blame, but men.

To effect this, the first thing we need is men, and the next is funds. Through the grace of our Guru I was sure to get from ten to fifteen men in every town. I next travelled in search of funds, but do you think the people of India were going to spend money!! * * Selfishness personified—are they to spend anything! Therefore I have come to America, to earn money myself, and then return to my country and devote the rest of my days to the realisation of this one aim of my life.

As our country is poor in social virtues, so this country is lacking in spirituality. I give them spirituality and they give me money. I do not know how long I shall take to realise my end. * * These people are not hypocrites, and jealousy is altogether absent in them. I depend on no one in Hindusthan. I shall try to earn the wherewithals myself to the best of my might and carry out my plans, or die in the attempt. “सन्निधिसे वरं त्यागो विनाष्टे निश्चये सति।”—When death is certain, it is best to sacrifice oneself for a good cause.

You may perhaps think what Utopian nonsense all this is! You little know what is in me. If any of you help me in my plans, all right, or Gurudeva

will show me the way out. * * We cannot give up jealousy and rally together. That is our national sin!! It is not to be met with in this country, and this is what has made them so great.

Nowhere in the world have I come across such 'frogs-in-the-well' as we are. Let anything new come from some foreign country, and America will be the first to accept it. But we?—O, there are none like us in the world, we men of Aryan blood!! Where that heredity really comes up, I do not see. * * Yet they are descendants of the Aryans!

Ever yours,

Vivekananda.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

1894.

Dear and beloved,

Your letter gives me all the news over there. I am grieved to hear of the bereavement — has sustained. Such is the Lord's will. This is a place for action, not enjoyment, and everyone will go home when his task is done,—some earlier, and some later, that is all. F— has gone—well, such is the will of the Lord! It is a welcome news that Sri Ramakrishna's Festival has come off with great *clat*; the more his name is spread, the better it is.

But there is one thing to know—great sages come with special messages for the world, and not for name, but their followers throw their teachings overboard and fight over their names—this is verily the history of the world. I do not take into any consideration whether people accept his name or not, but am ready to lay down my life to help his teachings, his life and his message spread all over the world. What I am most afraid of is the worship-room. It is not bad in itself, but there is a tendency in some to make this all in all and set up that old-fashioned nonsense over again,—this is what makes me nervous. I know why they busy themselves with those old, effete ceremonials. Their spirit craves for work, but having got no outlet they waste their energy in ringing bells and all that.

I am giving you a new idea. If you can work it out then I shall know you are men, and will be of service.....Make an organised plan. A few cameras, some maps, globes, and some chemicals etc. are needed. The next thing you want is a big hut. Then you must get together a number of poor, indigent folk. Having done all these, show them pictures from Astronomy, Geography etc. and preach Sri Ramakrishna to them. Try to have their eyes opened as to what has taken place or is taking place in different countries, what this world is like, and so forth. You have got lots of poor and ignorant folk there. Go to their cottages, from door to door, in the evening, at noon, any time,—and open their eyes. Books etc. won't do—give

them oral teaching. Then slowly extend your centres. Can you do all this? Or, only bell-ringing?

I have heard everything about — from Madras. They are highly pleased with him. Dear —, if you go to Madras and live there for some time, it will do a lot of work. But before you go, start this work there first. Can't the lady devotees convert some widows into disciples? And can't you put a bit of learning into their heads? And can't you then send them out to preach Sri Ramakrishna from door to door, and impart education along with it? * *

Come! Apply yourselves heart and soul to it. The day of gossip and ceremonials is gone, my boy, *you must work now*. Now, let me see how far a Bengalee's religion will go. L— wants some warm clothing. The people here import winter clothing from Europe and India. You will get a piece of cloth in Calcutta at one fourth of the price at which I shall buy it here.....I don't know when I shall go to Europe, everything is uncertain with me—I am getting on somehow in this country, that is all.

This is a very funny country. It is now summer—this morning it was as hot as April in Bengal, but now it is as cold as February at Allahabad! So much fluctuation within four hours! The hotels of this country beggar description. For instance, there is an hotel in New York where a room can be hired for up to Rs. 5000 a day, excluding boarding charges. Not even in Europe

is there a country like this in point of luxury. It is indeed the richest country in the world, where money is drained off like water. I seldom live in hotels, but am mostly the guest of big people here. To them I am a widely known man. The whole country knows me now, so wherever I go they receive me with open arms into their homes. Mr. H—'s home is my centre in Chicago.—I call his wife mother, and his daughters call me brother. I scarcely find a family so highly pure and kind. Or why should God shower His blessings on them in such abundance, my brother? Oh, how wonderfully kind they are! If they chance to learn that a poor man is in a strait at such and such a place, there, they will go, ladies and gentlemen, to give him food and clothing, and find him some job! And what do we do!

In summer they leave their homes to go to foreign lands, or to the sea-side. I, too, shall go somewhere, but have not yet fixed a place. In other points, they are just as you see with Englishmen. They have got books and things of that sort, but very dear. You can have five times those things in Calcutta for the same price. In other words, these people will not let foreign goods be imported into the country. They set a heavy tax on them, and as a result, the market goes up enormously. Besides, they are not much in the way of manufacturing clothings etc. They construct tools and machinery, and grow wheat, rice, cotton etc.—which are fairly cheap.

By the bye, now-a-days we have plenty of *hilsa* fish here. Eat your fill, but everything digests. There are many kinds of fruits; plantain, lemon, guava, apple, almond, raisin, and grape are in abundance; besides many other fruits come from California. There are plenty of pineapples, but there are no mangoes or lichis, or things of that sort.

There is a kind of spinach, which when cooked, tastes just like our *noté* of Bengal, and another class, which they call asparagus, tastes exactly like the tender *denko* herb, but you can't have our *charchari* made of it here. There is no *kaldai* or any other pulse, they do not even know of them. There is rice, and loaf, and numerous varieties of fish and meat, of all descriptions. Their menu is like that of the French. There is your milk, rarely curd, but plenty of whey. Cream is an article of every-day use. In tea, and coffee, and everything there is that cream,—not the hardened crust of boiled milk, mind you—and there is your butter, too, and ice-water,—no matter whether it is summer or winter, day or night, whether you have got a bad cold or fever,—you have ice-water in abundance. These are scientific people and laugh when they are told that ice-water aggravates cold. The more you take, the better. And there is plenty of ice-cream, of all sorts of shapes. I have seen the Niagara Falls seven or eight times, the Lord be praised! Very grand no doubt, but not quite as you have heard them spoken of. One day, in winter, we had the *aurora borealis*. * * Only

childish prattle! I have not much time to listen to that sort of thing in this life; it will be time enough to see if I can do that in the next.

J— has completely rallied by this time, I hope? The vagabond spirit of — is not yet at an end, I see. What is wanted is a power of organisation—do you understand me? Have any of you got that much brain in your head? If you do, let your mind work. — will be able to do it. — has got very little originality, but is a very good workman, and persevering—which is an essential necessity, and is executive to a degree. * * We want some disciples—fiery young men,—do you see?—intelligent and brave, who dare to go to the jaws of Death, and are ready to swim the ocean across. Do you follow me? We want hundreds like that, both men and women. Try your utmost for that end alone. Make converts right and left, and put them into our purity-drilling machine. 246 78

* * What made you communicate to the "Indian Mirror" that Paramahansa Deva used to call Narendra such and such, and all sorts of nonsense?—As if he had nothing else to do but that! Only thought-reading and nonsensical mystery-mongering! * * It is excellent that — is visiting you often. Do you write letters to G—? Convey to him my love, and take kind care of him. Every thing will come right by degrees. I don't find much time to write heaps of letters. As for lectures and so forth, I don't prepare them beforehand. Only one I wrote out, which you have printed.

The rest I deliver off-hand, whatever comes to my lips,—Gurudeva backs me on. I have nothing to do with pen and paper. Once at Detroit I held forth for three hours at a stretch. Sometimes I myself wonder at my own achievement—to think that there was such stuff in this pate! They ask me here to write a book, well, I think I must do something that way, this time. But that's the botheration; who will take the trouble of putting things in black and white and all that! * *

We must electrify society, electrify the world. Idle gossips and barren ceremonials won't do. Ceremonials are meant for householders, your work is the distribution and propagation of thought-currents. If you can do that, then it is all right. * *

Let character be formed, and then I shall be in your midst. Do you see? We want two thousand Sannyasins, nay ten, or even twenty thousand—men and women, both. What are our matrons doing? We want converts at any risk. Go and tell them, and try yourselves, heart and soul. Not house-holder-disciples, mind you, we want Sannyasins. Let each one of you have a hundred heads tonsured—young educated men, not fools. Then you are heroes. We must make a sensation. Give up your passive attitude, gird your loins and stand up. Let me see you make some electric circuits between Calcutta and Madras. Start centres at places, go on always making converts. Convert everyone into the monastic order, whoever seeks

for it, irrespective of sex, and then I shall be in your midst. A huge spiritual tidal wave is coming—he who is low shall become noble and he who is ignorant shall become the teacher of great scholars—through his grace. “उत्तिष्ठत आगतं प्राप्नुवन् वरात्रिबोधत”—“Awake! Arise! and stop not till the goal is reached.” Life is ever expanding, contraction is death. The self-seeking man who is looking after his personal comforts and leading a lazy life,—there is no room for him even in hell. He alone is a child of Sri Ramakrishna who is moved to pity for all creatures and exerts himself for them even at the risk of incurring personal damnation—इतरे कृपणाः—“others are vulgar people.” Whoever, at this great spiritual juncture, will stand up with a courageous heart, and go on spreading from door to door, from village to village, his message, is alone my brother, and a son of his. This is the test, he who is Ramakrishna’s child, does not seek his personal good.—“प्राणान्त्ययेऽपि परकल्याणचिकीर्षवः”—They wish to do good to others even when at the point of death. Those that care for their personal comforts and seek a lazy life, who are ready to sacrifice all before their personal whims, are none of us; let them pack off, yet while there is time. Propagate his character, his teachings, his religion. This is the only spiritual practice, the only worship, this verily is the means, and this the goal. Arise! Arise! A tidal wave is coming! Onward! Men and women, down to the Chandála—all are pure in his eyes. Onward! Onward! There is no time to care

for name, or fame, or Mukti, or Bhakti! We shall look to these some other time. Now in this life let us infinitely spread his lofty character, his sublime life, his infinite soul. This is the only work—there is nothing else to do. Wherever his name will reach, the veriest worm will attain divinity, nay, *is* actually attaining it, you have got eyes and don't you see it? Is it a child's play? Is it silly prattle? Is it foolery? “उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत”—“Arise! Awake!” Great Lord! He is at our back. I cannot write any more.—Onward! I only tell you this that whoever reads this letter, will imbibe my spirit! Have faith! Onward! Great Lord! * * I feel as if somebody is moving my hand to write in this way. Onward! Great Lord! Everyone will be swept away! Take care, he is coming! Whoever will be ready to serve him,—no, not him but his children,—the poor and the downtrodden, the sinful and the afflicted, down to the very worm—who will be ready to serve these, in them he will manifest himself. Through their tongue the Goddess of Learning Herself will speak, and the Divine Mother—the Embodiment of all Power—will enthroned Herself in their hearts. Those that are atheists, unbelievers, worthless and foppish, why do they call themselves as belonging to his fold? * *

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

P. S. * * The term Organisation means division of labour. Each does his own part and all the parts taken together express an ideal of harmony. * *

(Original)

[*Written to Rao Bahadur Narasimha Chariar.*]

Chicago,
23rd June, 1891.

Dear Sir,

Your kindness to me makes me venture to take a little advantage of it. Mrs. P. is the chief lady of the United States. She was the lady President of the World's Fair. She is much interested in raising the women of the world and is at the head of a big organisation for women. She is a particular friend of Lady Dufferin and has been entertained by the Royalties of Europe on account of her wealth and position. She has been very kind to me in this country. Now she is going to make a tour in China, Japan, Siam and India. Of course she will be entertained by the Governors and other high people in India. But she is particularly anxious to see our society apart from English official aid. I have on many occasions told her about your noble efforts in raising the Indian women, of your wonderful College in Mysore. I think it is our duty to show a little hospitality to such personages from America in return for their kindness to our countrymen who came here. I hope she will find a warm reception at your hands and be helped to see a little of our women as they are. And I assure you she is no missionary, nor Christian even as to that. She wants to work apart from all religions to ameliorate

the condition of women all over the world. This would also be helping me a great deal in this country.

May the Lord bless you.

Yours for ever and ever

Affectionate

Vivekananda.

Baltimore, U. S. A.
23rd October, 1894.

Dear—

Glad to receive your letter and go through the contents. I received to-day a letter of A— from London, which also gives me some information.

* * * *

Now you have come to know your own powers.— Strike the iron while it is hot. Idleness won't do. Throw overboard all idea of jealousy and egotism, once for all. Come on to the practical field with tremendous energy; to work, in the fulness of strength! As to the rest, the Lord will point out the way. The whole world will be deluged by a tidal wave. Work, work, work,—let this be your motto. I cannot see anything else. There is no end of work here—I am careering all over the country. Wherever the seed of his power will find its way, there it will fructify—**सद्यः सार्वभौमिकान्ते वा**—be it to-day, or in a hundred years. You must work in sympathy with all, then only it will lead to quick results.

* * Our object is to do good to the world, and not the trumpeting of our own names. Why doesn't N— learn Pali, in Ceylon, and study Buddhist books? I cannot make out what good will come of aimless rambling. * * Those that have come under his protection, have Virtue, Wealth, Desires and Freedom lying at their feet. **मायेः मायेः**—courage! Everything will come about by degrees. From all of you I want this that you must discard for ever self-aggrandisement, faction-mongering and jealousy. You must be all-forbearing, like Mother Earth. If you can achieve this, the world will be at your feet.

* * Try to give less of material food in the anniversary celebrations, and give some food for the brain instead. * *

Vivekananda.

541. Dearborn Avenue, Chicago,
C/o George W. Hale.
1894.

My dear —

Very glad to receive your letter. I am very sorry to hear of —'s doings. One always behaves thus in trying to push himself before all others. I am not much to blame. — came here ten years ago, and got much reputation and honour; now I am in flying colours. Such is the will of the Guru, what shall I do? It is childishness on —'s part to be annoyed at this. Never mind,

उपेक्षितं तद्वचनं भवत्सदृशानां महात्मनाम् । अपि कीदृशतयीरुका
 वचं रामकृष्णतनयास्तद्वचनं धिरपीयिताः । “अलोकसान्धान्यमचिन्त्य-
 हेतुकं निम्नन्ति मन्त्राचरितं महात्मनाम्” इत्यादीनि संस्तुत्य सन्तप्त्योऽयं
 आत्मः ।—Great men like you should pay no heed to
 what he says. Shall we, children of Sri Rama-
 krishna and nourished with his heart's blood, be
 afraid of worm-bites? “The wicked criticise the
 conduct of the magnanimous, which is extra-
 ordinary and whose motives are difficult to
 fathom,”†—remember all this and forgive this fool.
 It is the will of the Lord that people of this land
 have their power of introspection roused, and does
 it lie in anybody to check His progress? I want
 no name—I want to be a voice without a form. I do
 not require anybody to defend me—कोऽहं तस्याद-
 प्रतरं प्रतिरोधुं समर्थयितुं वा, के वान्ये? तथापि मम हृदयकृतज्ञता
 तान् प्रति ।—Who am I to check or to help the course
 of His march? And who are others also? Still,
 my heartfelt gratitude to them. “यस्मिंस्थितो न दुःखेन
 गुरुणापि विचल्यते”—जैषः प्राप्तवान् सत्त्वदवीमिति मन्त्रा करुणादृष्ट्या
 ब्रह्मव्योऽयमिति ।—“Established in which state a man is
 not moved even by great misfortune (Gita)” —
 that state he has not reached, think of this and
 look upon him with pity. Through the Lord's will,
 the desire for name and fame has not yet crept into
 my heart, and I dare say, never will. I am an
 instrument and He is the operator. Through this
 instrument He is rousing the religious instinct
 in thousands of hearts in this far-off country.

† Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhavam*.

Thousands of men and women here love and revere me. * * "दुर्बलं कर्षति वाचमसं पश्यन् ब्रह्मणे मित्रम्"—He makes the dumb eloquent and makes the lame cross mountains. I am amazed at His grace. Whatever town I visit, it is in an uproar. They have named me "the cyclonic Hindu." Remember, it is His will,—I am a voice without a form.

The Lord knows whether I shall go to England or any other blessed place. He will arrange everything. Here a cigar costs one rupee. Once you get into a cab, you have to pay three rupees; a coat costs a hundred rupees; the hotel charge is nine rupees a day.—The Lord provides everything. * * The Lord be praised, I know nothing. "सत्यमेव जयते नानृतम् सत्यमेव पन्था विततो देवयानः"—"Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Through Truth alone lies the path of Devayāna." You must be fearless. It is the coward who fears and defends himself. Let no one amongst us come forward to defend me. I get all news of Madras and Rajputana, from time to time. * * There are eyes that can see at a distance of fourteen thousand miles. It is quite true. Keep quiet now, everything will see the light in time, as far as He wills it. Not one word of His proves untrue. My brother, do men grieve over the fight of cats and dogs? So, the jealousy, envy and elbowing of common men should make no impression on your mind. For the last six months I have been saying, the curtain is going up, the sun is rising, Yes, the curtain is lifting, by degrees, slow but sure, you will come to know it in time.

He knows. One cannot speak out his mind. These are things not for writing. * * Never let go your hold of the rudder, grasp it firm. We are steering all right, no mistaking that, but landing on the other shore is only a question of time. That's all. Can a leader be got up, my brother? A leader is born. Do you follow me? And it is a very difficult task to take on the role of a leader.—One must be दासस्य दासः—a servant of servants, and must accommodate a thousand minds. There must not be a shade of jealousy or selfishness, then you are a leader. First, by birth, and secondly, unselfish,—that's a leader. Everything is going all right, everything will come round. He casts the net all right, and winds it up likewise—बद्धमुत्तरामः बद्धमुत्तरामः ॥ श्रीनिः परमसाधनम् ।—ours is but to follow. Love is the best instrument. Love conquers in the long run. It won't do to become impatient—wait, wait,—patience is bound to give success. * *

I tell you, brother, let everything go on as it is, only take care that no form become necessary—unity in variety—see that universality be not hampered in the least. Everything must be sacrificed, if necessary, for that one sentiment, *universality*. Whether I live or die, whether I go back to India or not, remember this specially, that universality—perfect acceptance, not tolerance only—we preach and perform. Take care how you trample on the least rights of others. Many a huge ship has foundered in that whirlpool. Remember, perfect devotion minus its bigotry—this is what we

have got to show. Through His grace everything will go all right. * * Everybody wants to be a leader, but it is the failure to grasp that he is *born*, that causes all this mischief. * *

Our Matrons are all hale and hearty, I hope? Where is Mother —? We want a thousand such Mothers, with that noble stirring spirit. * * We want all. It is not at all necessary that all would have the same faith in our Lord as we have, but we want to unite all the powers of goodness against all the powers of evil. * * A besetting sin with Sannyasins is the taking pride in their monastic order. That may have its utility during the first stages, but when they are full-grown, they need it no more. One must make no distinction between householders and Sannyasins—then only one is a true Sannyasin. * *

A movement which half a dozen penniless boys set on foot and which now bids fair to progress in such an accelerated motion,—is it a humbug or the Lord's will? If it is, then let all give up party spirit and jealousy, and make united action. A universal religion cannot be set up through party faction. * *

If all understand one day for one minute that one cannot become great by the mere wish, that he only rises whom He raises, and he falls whom He brings down, then all trouble is at an end. But there is that egotism,—hollow in itself, and without the power to move a finger: how ludicrous of it to say, 'I won't let anyone rise!' That jealousy,

that absence of conjoined action is the very nature of enslaved nations. But we must try to shake it off. That terrible jealousy is characteristic of us. * * You will be convinced of this if you visit some other countries. Our fellows in this respect are the enfranchised Negroes of this country—if but one amongst them rises to greatness, all the others would at once set themselves against him and try to level him down by making a common cause with the whites. * *

At any cost, any price, any sacrifice, we must never allow that to creep in among ourselves. Whether we be ten or two, do not care, but those few must be perfect characters. * * 'It is not good to ask of one's father if the Lord looks after the provision.' And the lord *will* do so, set your minds easy on that score. * * We must spread his name in Rajputana, Punjab, U. P., Madras, and such other provinces—yes, in Rajputana, where still there are people who can say, 'Such has ever been the custom with Raghu's line that they keep their word even at the cost of life.'

A bird, in the course of its flight, reaches a spot whence it looks on the ground below with supreme calmness. Have you reached that spot? He who has not reached there has no right to teach others. Relax your limbs and float with the current, and you are sure to reach your destination.

Cold is making itself scarce by degrees, and I have been almost through the winter. Here in winter the whole body becomes charged with

electricity. In shaking hands one feels a shock, accompanied by a sound. You can light the gas with your finger. And about winter, I have written to you already. I am coursing through the length and breadth of the country, but Chicago is my 'Math,' where I always return after my wanderings. I am now making for the east. He knows where the bark will reach the shore. * *

Has — the same sort of love for you? Does he see you frequently? How is B— and what is he doing? Do you visit him, and look upon him with an eye of regard? Yes, brother, the distinction between Sannyasin and layman is a fiction, 'मूकं करोति वाचालं' &c.—He makes the dumb fluent &c. My friend, it is difficult to judge what is in a particular individual. He (Sri Ramakrishna) has spoken highly of him and he deserves our respect. Fie upon you if you have no faith even after so much experience! Does he love you? Please convey to him my hearty love and esteem. My love to K—, he is a very noble soul. How is —? Has he got a little faith and devotion? My love and greetings to —. — is moving all right with the mill, I suppose? Ask him to have patience and the mill will go on all right.

My heart's love to all.

Ever yours in love,

Vivekananda.

New York
25th September, 1894.

My Dear —

Glad to receive some letters from you. It gives me great pleasure to learn that S— and others are making a stir. We must create a stir, nothing short of this will do. You will be throwing the whole world into convulsions.—Victory to the Guru! You know, “श्रेयांसि बहुविधानि”—“Great undertakings are always fraught with many obstacles.” It is these obstacles which knock and shape great characters. * * Is it in the power of Missionaries and people of that sort to withstand this shock? * * Should a fool succeed where scholars have failed? It is no go, my boy, set your mind at ease about that. In every attempt there will be one set of men who will applaud, and another who will pick holes. Go on doing your own work, what need have you to reply to any party? “सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्येनैव पन्था विततो देवयानः”—“Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Through Truth lies the path of Devayana.” * * Everything will come about by degrees.

Here in summer they go to the seaside,—I also did the same. They have got almost a mania for boating and yachting. The yacht is a kind of light vessel which everyone, young and old, who has the means, possesses. They set sail in them everyday to the sea, and return home, to eat and drink and dance,—while music continues day and night. Pianos render it a botheration to stay indoors!

I shall now tell you something of the —s— to whose address you direct my letters. He and his wife are an old couple, having two daughters, two nieces and a son. The son lives abroad where he earns a living. The daughters live at home. In this country relationship is through the girls. The son marries and no longer belongs to the family but the daughter's husband pays frequent visits to his father-in-law's house. They say,

‘Son is son till he gets a wife

The daughter is daughter all his life.’

All the four are young and not yet married. Marriage is a very troublesome business here. In the first place one must have a husband after one's heart. Secondly, he must be a moneyed man. * * They will probably live unmarried; besides, they are now full of renunciation through my contact and are busy with thoughts of Brahman!

The two daughters are blondes that is, have golden hair, while the two nieces are brunettes, that is, of dark hair. They know all sorts of occupations. The nieces are not so rich, they conduct a Kindergarten school, but the daughters do not earn. Many girls of this country earn their living. Nobody depends upon others. Even millionaire's sons earn their living, but they marry and have separate establishments of their own. The daughters call me brother, and I address their mother as Mother. All my things are at their places, and they look after them, wherever I may go. Here the boys go in search of a living while quite young,

and the girls are educated in the universities. So you will find that in a meeting there will be 99 per cent. of girls. The boys are nowhere in comparison with them.

There are good many spiritualists in this country. The medium is one who induces the spirit. He goes behind a screen, and out of the latter come ghosts, of all sizes and all colours. I have witnessed some cases, but they seemed to be a hoax. I shall test some more before I come to a final conclusion. Many of the spiritualists respect me.

Next comes Christian Science. They form the most influential party, now-a-days, figuring everywhere. They are spreading by leaps and bounds, and causing heart-burn to the orthodox. They are Vedantins; I mean, they have picked up a few doctrines of the Advaita and grafted them upon the Bible. And they cure diseases by proclaiming "सोऽहं सोऽहं"—"I am He! I am He!"—through strength of mind. They all admire me highly.

Now-a-days the orthodox section of this country are crying for help. 'Devil worship' † is but a thing of the past. They are mortally afraid of me and exclaim, "What a pest! Thousands of men and women follow him! He is going to root out orthodoxy!" Well, the torch has been applied and the conflagration that has set in through the

† The Orthodox Christians brand Hindus and people of other religion with this name and look upon them with scorn.

grace of the Guru, will not be put out. In course of time the bigots will have their breath knocked out of them. * *

The Theosophists have not much power. But they, too, are dead set against the orthodox section.

This Christian Science is exactly like our *Kartábhajá*† sect: Say, "I have no disease," and you are whole; and say, "I am He"—"होऽहं"—and you are quits,—be at large. This is a thoroughly materialistic country. The people of this Christian land will recognise religion if only you can cure diseases, work miracles, and open up avenues to money, and understands little of anything else. But there are honorable exceptions. * *

People here have found a new type of man in me. Even the orthodox are at their wit's end. And people are now looking up to me with an eye of reverence. Is there a greater strength than that of Brahmacharyam,—purity, my boy?

I am now busy writing a reply to the Madras Address, which was published in all the newspapers here and created a sensation. If it be cheap, I shall send it in print, but if dear, I shall send a type-written copy. To you also I shall send a copy; have it published in the Indian Mirror. The unmarried girls of this country are very good and have a good deal of self-respect. * * These (the

† An offshoot of Vaishnavism during its degeneracy. They call God "Kartá" or Master and are noted for their efficiency in faith-cure.

people) are come of Virochanā's race. To them ministering to the body is a great thing : they would trim and polish and give their whole attention to that. A thousand instruments, for paring nails, ten thousand for hair-cutting, and who can count the varieties of dress and toilet and perfumery? * * They are good-natured, kind, and truthful. All is right with them but that enjoyment is their God. It is a country where money flows like rivers, with beauty as its ripple, and learning its waves, and which roll in luxury.

“कांचिन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।

सिद्धिं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥ ”

—“Longing for success in action, in this world, (men) worship the deities. For success is quickly attained through action in this world of man.” (Gita)

Here you have a wonderful manifestation of grit and power—what strength, what practicality, and what manhood ! Horses huge as elephants are drawing carriages that are as big as houses. You may take this as a specimen of gigantic proportions in other things also. Here is a manifestation of tremendous energy. * * They look with veneration upon women, who play a most prominent part in their lives. Here this form of worship has attained

¶ The King of the Asuras and son of the saintly Prahlada. He went to Brahmā for self-knowledge, but misunderstanding His teachings turned a materialist. (Chhândogya Upa.. Chap. VIII.)

its perfection—this is the long and short of it. But to come to the point. Well, I am almost at very wits' end to see the women of this country! They take me to the shops and everywhere, as if I were a child. They do all sorts of work—I cannot do even a sixteenth part of what they do. They are like Lakshmi (the Goddess of Fortune) in beauty, and like Saraswati (the Goddess of Learning) in virtues—they are the Divine Mother incarnate, and worshipping them, one verily attains perfection in everything. Great God! Are we to be counted among men? If I can raise a thousand such Madonnas—Incarnations of the Divine Mother in our country, before I die, I shall die in peace. Then only will your countrymen become worthy of their name. * *

I am really struck with wonder to see— the women here. How gracious the Divine Mother is on them! Most wonderful women, these! They are about to corner the men, who have been nearly worsted in the competition. It is all through Thy grace, O Mother! * * I shall not rest till I root out this distinction of sex. Is there any sex-distinction in the Atman? Out with the differentiation between man and woman—all is Atman! Give up the identification with the body, and stand up! Say, “अस्ति, अस्ति” “Everything is!”—cherish positive thoughts. By dwelling too much upon “नास्ति, नास्ति”—“It is not! It is not!” (negativism.), the whole country is going to ruin! “सोऽहं, सोऽहं, शिवोऽहं”—“I am He! I am He! I am

Shiva!" What a botheration! In every soul is infinite strength; and should you turn yourselves into cats and dogs by harbouring negative thoughts? Who dares to preach negativism? Whom do you call weak and powerless? "शिवोऽहं, शिवोऽहं"—"I am Shiva! I am Shiva!" I feel as if a thunderbolt strikes me on the head when I hear people dwell on negative thoughts. That sort of self-depreciating attitude is another name for disease—do you call that humility? It is vanity in disguise! "न लिङ्गं धर्मकारणं, समता सर्वभूतेषु एतन्मुक्तमय लक्षणं"—"The external badge does not confer spirituality. It is same-sightedness to all beings which is the test of a liberated soul." "अस्ति अस्ति, सोऽहं सोऽहं, चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहं"—"I am He!" "I am Shiva, of the essence of Knowledge and Bliss!" "निर्गच्छति जगज्जालात्पिञ्जरादिव केशरी"—"He frees himself from the meshes of this world as a lion from its cage!" "नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः"—"This Atman is not accessible to the weak." * * Hurl yourselves on the world like an avalanche—let the world crack in twain under your weight! Hara! Hara! Mahadeva! "उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानम्"—"One must save the self by his own self—by personal prowess."

* * Will such a day come when this life will go for the sake of other's good? The world is not a child's play,—and great men are those who build highways for others with their heart's blood. This has been taking place through eternity, that one builds a bridge by laying down his own body and thousands of others cross the river through

its help. "एवमस्तु, एवमस्तु, शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहं"—"Be it so! Be it so! I am Shiva! I am Shiva!" * *

It is a welcome news that Madras is in a stir.

Were you not going to start a paper or something of that sort, what about that? We must mix with all, and alienate none. All the powers of good against all the powers of evil—this is what we want. Do not insist upon everybody's believing in our Guru. * * You shall have to edit a magazine, half Bengali and half Hindi—and, if possible, another in English. * * It won't do to be roaming aimlessly. Wherever you go, you must start a permanent preaching centre. Then only will people begin to change. I am writing a book. As soon as it is finished, I run for home! * * Always remember that Sri Ramakrishna came for the good of the world—not for name or fame. *Spread only what he came to teach. Never mind for his name—it will spread of itself.* Directly you insist on everybody's accepting your Guru, you will be creating a sect, and everything will come to the ground,—so beware! Have a kind word for all—it spoils work to show temper. Let people say whatever they like, stick to your own convictions, and rest assured, the world will be at your feet. They say, 'Have faith in this fellow or that fellow,' but I say, 'Have faith in yourself first,' that's the way. Have faith in yourself—all power is in you,—be conscious and bring it out. Say, 'I can do everything.' "Even the poison of a snake is powerless if you can firmly deny it."

Beware! No saying 'nay,' No negative thoughts!
Say, 'Yea, yea,' 'सोऽहं, सोऽहं'—'I am He! I am He!'

किन्नाम रोदिषि सखे त्वयि सर्वशक्तिः

आमन्त्रयस्व भगवन् भगदं स्वरूपम् ।

बैलोक्यमेतदखिलं तव पादमूले

आत्मैव हि प्रभवते न जडः कदाचित् ॥

"What makes you weep, my friend? In you is all power. Summon up your all-powerful nature, O mighty one, and this whole universe will lie at your feet. It is the Self alone that predominates, and not matter."

To work with undaunted energy! What fear!
Who is powerful enough to thwart you! कुर्मस्तारकचर्चयं
त्रिभुवनभूत्वादयामः बलात् किं भो न विज्ञानस्यस्मान्, रामकृष्णदासा
वयम्—We shall crush the stars to atoms, and un-
hinge the universe. Don't you know who we are?
We are the servants of Sri Ramakrishna. Fear!
Whom to fear, forsooth!

क्षीयाःस्म दीनाः सकरुणाः जल्पन्ति मूढा जनाः

नास्तिक्यन्तिवदन्तु अहह देहात्मवादातुराः ।

प्राप्ताःस्म वीरा गतभया अमयं प्रतिष्ठां यदा

आस्तिक्यन्तिवदन्तु चितुमः रामकृष्णदासा वयम् ॥

पीत्वा पीत्वा परमममृतं वीतसंसाररागाः

हित्वा हित्वा सकलकलहप्रापिनीं स्वार्थसिद्धिं ।

ध्यात्वा ध्यात्वा गुरुवरपदं सर्वकल्याणरूपं

नत्वा नत्वा सकलभूवनम् पातुमामन्त्रयामः ॥

प्राप्तं यद्वै त्वनादिनिधनं वेदोदधिं मयित्वा

दत्तं यस्य प्रकरणे हरिहरब्रह्मादिवैर्बलं ।

पूर्णं यच्च प्राणसातैर्भौमनारायणानां

रामकृष्णस्तनुं धत्ते तत्पूर्णपात्रमिदं भोः ॥

—“It is those foolish people who identify themselves with their bodies, and piteously cry ‘we are weak, we are low.’ All this is atheism. Now that we have attained the state beyond fear, we shall have no more fear and become heroes. This indeed is theism which we will choose, the servants of Sri Ramakrishna.

“Giving up the attachment for the world and drinking constantly the supreme nectar of immortality, for ever discarding that self-seeking spirit which is the mother of all dissension, and ever meditating on the blessed feet of our Guru which is the embodiment of all well-being, with repeated salutations we invite the whole world to participate in drinking the nectar.

“That nectar which has been obtained by churning the infinite ocean of the Vedas, into which Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and the other gods have poured their strength, which is charged with the life-essence of the Avatars—Gods (Incarnate on earth),—Sri Ramakrishna holds that nectar in his person, in its fullest measure!”

We must work among the English-educated young men. “स्यगिनैकेन अमृतत्वमानुः”—“Through renunciation alone they attained immortality.” Renunciation!—Renunciation!—you must preach this above everything else. There will be no spiritual strength unless one renounces the world. * *

Why are — suffering so much? It is owing to their negative, their self-abasing spirit. Tell them to brush aside their illness by mental strength and

in an hour it will disappear! I the Atman smitten with disease? Off with it! Tell them to meditate for an hour at stretch, "I am the Atman, how can I be affected by disease!"—and everything will vanish. Think all of you that you are the infinitely powerful Atman, and see what strength comes out.

* * Self-depreciating! What is it for! I am the child of the infinite, the all-powerful Divine Mother. What means disease, or fear, or want, to me? Stamp out the negative spirit as if it were a pestilence, and it will conduce to your welfare in every way. No negative, all positive, affirmative. I am, God is, everything is in me. I *will* manifest health, purity, knowledge, whatever I want. Well, these foreign people could grasp my teachings and you are suffering from illness owing to your negative spirit! Who says you are ill—what is disease to you? Brush it aside! * *

"वीर्यमसि वीर्यं, बलमसि बलं, ओजोऽसि ओजो, सहोऽसि सहो मयि धेहि"—"Thou art Energy, impart energy unto me. Thou art Strength, impart strength unto me. Thou art Spirituality, impart spirituality unto me. Thou art Fortitude, impart fortitude unto me!" The ceremony of steadying one's seat (*āsana-pratisthā*) that you perform everyday when you sit down to worship the Lord—"आत्मानमिच्छिद्मं भावयेत्"—"One must think of himself as strong and invulnerable" and so forth—what does it all mean? Say, "Everything is in me and I can manifest it at will." Repeat to yourself that such and such are Atman, that they are infinite, and how can they have any

disease? Repeat this an hour or so, on a few successive days, and all disease and trouble will vanish into nought.

Yours ever,

Vivekananda.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna !

1894.

My dear Akhandananda,

I am very glad to receive your letter. It is a great pleasure to me to learn that you have regained your health to a great extent by your stay at Khetri.

T— has done a good deal of work in Madras. Very agreeable news indeed ! I heard much praise of him from the people of Madras.

* * * *

Try to develop spirituality and philanthropy amongst the Thakurs in the different places of Rajputana. We must work, and this cannot be done by merely sitting idle. Make a trip now and then to Malsisor, Alsisor, and all the other 'sars' that are there. And carefully learn Sanskrit and English. G— is in the Punjab, I presume. Convey my special love to him and bring him to Khetri. Learn Sanskrit with his help, and teach

him English. Let me have his address by any means.

* * * *

Go from door to door amongst the poor and lower classes of the town of Khetri and teach them religion. Also, let them have oral lessons on geography and such other subjects. No good will come of sitting idle and having princely dishes, and saying "Ramakrishna, O Lord!"—unless you can do some good to the poor. Go to other villages from time to time and teach the people the arts of life as well as religion. Work, worship and Jnanam (knowledge)—first work and your mind will be purified; otherwise everything will be fruitless like pouring oblations on a pile of ashes instead of in the sacred fire. When G— comes, move from door to door of the poor and the destitute in every village of Rajputana. If people object to the kind of food you take, give it up immediately. It is preferable to live on grass for the sake of doing good to others. The *gerrua* robe is not for enjoyment. It is the banner of heroic work. You must give your body, mind and speech to "the welfare of the world." You have read—*मातृदेवो भव, पितृदेवो भव*— "Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God,"—but I say, "*दरिद्रदेवो भव, मूर्खदेवो भव*"—The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted—let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.

Ever yours, with blessings,
Vivekananda.

New York, 17th Jan., '95.

Dear—

Your two letters are to hand, as also the two of R— Babu. I have got the bill of lading, but it will be long before the goods arrive. Unless one arranges for the prompt despatch of goods they take about six months to come. It is four months since H— wrote that the *Rudraksha* beads and *kusha* mats had been despatched, but there is no news of their whereabouts yet. The thing is, when the goods reach England, the agent of the company here gives me notice, and about a month later, the goods arrive. I received your bill of lading about three weeks ago, but no sign of the notice! Only the goods sent by Raja of K— arrive quickly. Most probably he spends a lot of money after them. However, it is a matter of congratulation that goods do arrive without fail in this region of Pátála, at the other end of the globe. I shall let you know as soon as the goods come. Now keep quiet for at least three months! * *

Now is the time for you to apply yourself to start the magazine. Tell R— Babu that though the gentleman of whom he speaks be a competent person, I am not in a position to have anybody in America at present. * * What about your article on Tibet? When it is published in the Mirror,

send me a copy. * * Come, here is a task for you, conduct that magazine. Thrust it on people and make them subscribe to it, and don't be afraid. What work do you expect from men of little hearts?—Nothing in the world! You must have an iron will if you would cross the ocean. You must be strong enough to pierce mountains. I am coming next winter. We shall set the world on fire,—let those who will, join us and be blessed, and those that won't come, would lag behind for ever and ever; let them do so. You gird up your loins and keep yourself ready. * * Never mind anything! In your lips and hands [the Goddess of Learning will make Her seat; the Lord of infinite power will be seated on your chest; you will do works that will strike the world with wonder. By the bye, can't you shorten your name a bit, my boy? What a long, long name!—a single name enough to fill a volume! Well, you hear people say that the Lord's name keeps away death! It is not the simple name 'Hari,' mind you. It is those deep and sonorous names, such as **अघभग्नकविनाशन** (Destroyer of Agha, Bhaga, and Naraka), **त्रिपुरमदभञ्जन** (Subduer of the pride of Tripura, demon of the "three cities"), and **अशेषनिःशेषकल्याणकर** (Giver of infinite and endless blessings) and so forth—that put to rout King Death and his whole party. Won't it look nice if you simplify yours a little? But it is too late, I am afraid, as it has already been abroad. But, believe me, it is a world-entrancing,

death-defying name: that you have got!†

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

P. S. Throw the whole of Bengal and, for the matter of that, the whole of India into convulsion! Start centres at different places.

The Bhagavatam has reached me—a very nice edition indeed, but people of this country have not the least inclination for studying Sanskrit; hence there is very little hope for its sale. There may be a little in England, for, there many are interested in the study of Sanskrit. Give my special thanks to the editor. I hope his noble attempt will meet with complete success. I shall try my best to push his book here. I have sent his prospectus to different places. Tell R— Babu that a flourishing trade can be set on foot with England and America in *māṅg dāl*, *arhar dāl* &c. *Dāl* soup will have a go if properly introduced. There will be a good demand for them if they be sent from house to house, in small packets, with directions for cooking on them and a depot started for storing a quantity of them. Similarly *Barhis*‡ too will have a good market. We want an enterprising spirit. Nothing.

† The full name which Swami Trigunatita, to whom this letter was addressed, bore at first was “Swami Trigunatitananda,”—hence the Swamiji's pleasantries about it.

‡ Made of *dāl* pounded into a paste, beaten, and made into pellets.

is done by leading idle lives. If any one forms a company and exports Indian goods here and into England, it will be a good trade. But they are a lazy set. * *

1895.

Dear—

* * I am quite in agreement with what is doing, but it is not necessary to preach that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was an Incarnation, and things of that sort. He came to do good to the world, not to trumpet his own name,—you must always remember this. Disciples pay their whole attention to the preservation of their master's name, and throw overboard his teachings, and sectarianism etc. are its result. A— writes of C—, but I do not recollect him. Write all about him and convey him my thanks. Write in detail about B, I have no time to spare for idle gossip. * * Try to give up ceremonials. They are not meant for Sannyasins, and one must work only so long as he does not attain to illumination. * * I have nothing to do with sectarianism, or party-forming and playing the frog-in-the-well, whatever else I may do. * * It is impossible to preach the catholic ideas of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and prom sects at the same time. * * Only one kind of work I understand, and that is doing good to others, all else is doing evil. I therefore prostrate myself before the Lord Buddha. * * I am a Vedantist, Sachchidananda—Existence-Knowledge—

Bliss Absolute—is my God, I scarcely find any other God than the majestic form of my own Self. By the word 'Incarnation' are meant those who have attained that Brahmanhood, in other words, the Jivanmuktas—those who have realised this Freedom in this very life. I do not find any speciality in Incarnations: All beings from Brahman down to a clump of grass will attain to liberation-in-life in course of time, and our duty lies in helping all to reach that state. This help is called religion—the rest is irreligion. This help is work, the rest is evil-doing—I see nothing else. Other kinds of work, for example, the Vaidika or the Tantrika, may produce results—but resorting to them is simply waste of life—for that purity which is the goal of work is realisable only through doing good to others. Through works such as sacrifices etc., one may get enjoyments, but it is impossible to have the purity of soul. * * Everything exists already in the Self of all beings. He who asserts he is free, shall be free. He who says he is bound, bound he shall remain. To me, the thought of oneself as low and humble is a sin and ignorance.

नाममात्रा बलहीनेन ब्रह्मः—This Atman is not to be attained by one who is weak. **अस्ति ब्रह्म वदसि चेदस्ति भविष्यति नास्ति ब्रह्म वदसि चेन्नास्त्येव भविष्यति**—If you say Brahman *is*, existence will be the result, but if you say Brahman is *not*, non-existent It shall verily become. He who always thinks of himself as weak will never become strong, but he who knows himself to be a lion, "rushes out from the world's

meshes, as a lion from its cage"—“निर्जालि
 मगजालात् विजयादि केवरी.” Another point, it was no
 new truths that Ramakrishna Paramahansa came
 to preach, though his advent brought the old
 truths to light. In other words, he was the embodi-
 ment of all the past religious thought of India.
 His life alone made me understand what the
 Shastras really meant, and the whole plan and
 scope of the old Shastras.

Missionaries and others could not do much
 against me in this country. Through the Lord's
 grace the people here like me greatly and are not
 to be tricked by the opinions of any particular
 class. They appreciate my ideas in a manner my
 own countrymen cannot do, and are not selfish.
 I mean, when it comes to practical work, they
 would give up jealousy and all those ideas of
 self-sufficiency. Then all of them agree and act
 under the direction of a capable man. That is
 what makes them so great. But then they are
 a nation of Mammon-worshippers. Money comes
 before everything. People of our country are very
 liberal in pecuniary matters, but not so much these
 people. Every home has a miser. It is almost
 a religion here. But they fall into the clutches of
 the priests when they do something bad, and
 then buy their passage to heaven with money.
 These things are the same in every country,—priest-
 craft. I can say nothing as to whether I shall go
 back to India and when. There also I shall have
 to lead a wandering life as I do here, but here

thousands of people listen to and understand my lectures, and these thousands are benefited. But can you say the same thing about India? * * I am perfectly at one with what S— is doing. A thousand thanks to him. * * In Madras and Bombay I have lots of men who are after my heart. They are learned and understand everything. Moreover, they are kind-hearted and can therefore appreciate the philanthropic spirit. * * I have printed neither books nor anything of the kind, I simply go on lecturing tours. * * When I take a retrospective view of my past life, I feel no remorse. From country to country I have travelled teaching something, however little, to people, and in exchange for that have partaken of their slices of bread. If I had found I had done no work, but simply supported myself by imposing upon people, I would have committed suicide to-day. Why do those who think themselves unfit to teach their fellow-beings, wear the teacher's garb and earn their bread by cheating them? Is not that a deadly sin? * *

Yours etc.

Vivekananda.

54 W. 33 St. New York,
9th February, 1895.

Dear——

* * * Paramahansa Deva was my Guru, and whatever I may think of him in point of greatness, why should the world think after me? And if you

press the point hard, you will spoil everything. The idea of worshipping the Guru as God is nowhere to be met with outside Bengal, for other people are not yet ready to take up that ideal. * *

Henceforth address my letters as above, which is to be my permanent seat from now.

Try to send me an English translation of the Yogavasistha Ramayana. * *

Don't forget those books I asked for before, viz., Sanskrit Narada and Sandilya Sutras.

“आश्रयं हि परमं दुःखं नैवारयं परमं सुखम्”—Hope is the greatest of miseries, the highest bliss lies in giving up hope.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

Salutation to Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna !

1895.

Dear brother,

Before this I wrote to you a letter which for want of time was very incomplete. R— and H— wrote in a letter from Lucknow that Hindu newspapers were praising me, and that they were very glad that twenty thousand people had partaken of food at Sri Ramakrishna's Anniversary. I could do much more work, but for the Brahmos and Missionaries who have been opposing me unceasingly, and the Hindus of India too did

nothing for me. I mean, if the Hindus of Calcutta or Madras had held a meeting and passed a resolution recognising me as their representative, and thanking the American people for receiving me with kindness, things would have progressed appreciably. But it is over a year, and nothing done. Of course I never relied on the Bengalees, but the Madrasees couldn't do anything either. * *

There is no hope for our nation. Not one original idea crosses anyone's brains, all fighting over the same old, threadbare rug,—that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was such and such,—and cock-and-bull stories—stories having neither head nor tail. My God! Won't you do something to show that you are in any way removed from the common run of men!—Only indulging in madness! * * To-day you have your bell, to-morrow you add a horn, and follow suit with a chowry the day after; or you introduce a cot to-day, and to-morrow you have its legs silver-mounted, and people help themselves to a rice-porridge, and you spin out two thousand cock-and-bull stories—in short, nothing but external ceremonials. This is called in English Imbecility. Those into whose heads nothing but that sort of silliness enters, are called imbecile. Those whose heads have a tendency to be troubled day and night over such questions as whether the bell should ring on the right or on the left, whether the sandal-paste mark should be put on the head or anywhere else, whether the light should be waved twice or four times,—simply

deserve the name of wretches, and it is owing to that sort of notion that we are the outcasts of Fortune, kicked and spurned at, while the people of the West are masters of the whole world. * * There is an ocean of difference between idleness and renunciation.

If you want any good to come, just throw your ceremonials overboard and worship the Living God, the Man-God—every being that wears a human form,—God in His universal as well as individual aspect. The universal aspect of God means this world, and worshipping it means serving it—this indeed is work, not indulging in ceremonials. Neither is it work to cogitate as to whether the rice-plate should be placed in front of the God for ten minutes or for half an hour,—that is called lunacy. Millions of rupees have been spent only that the temple-doors at Benares or Brindaban may play at opening and shutting all day long! Now the Lord is having His toilet, now He is taking His meals, now He is busy on something else we know not what. * * And all this, while the Living God is dying for want of food, for want of education. The banias of Bombay are erecting hospitals for bugs,—while they would do nothing for men—even if they die! You have not the brain to understand this simple thing—that it is a plague with our country; and lunatic asylums are rife all over. * * Let some of you spread like fire, and preach this worship of the universal aspect of Godhead—

thing that was never undertaken before in our country. No quarrelling with people, we must be friends with all. * *

Spread ideas—go from village to village, from door to door—then only there will be real work. Otherwise, lying complacently on the bed and ringing the bell now and then is a sort of disease, pure and simple. * * Be independent, learn to form independent judgments.—That such and such a chapter of such and such a Tantra has prescribed a standard length for the handle of a bell,—what matters it to me? Through the Lord's Will out of your lips shall come millions of Vedas and Tantras and Puranas. * * If now you can show this in practice, if you can make three or four hundred thousand disciples in India within a year, then only I may have some hope. * *

By the bye, you know the boy who had his head shaven and went with T— from Bombay to Rameswar? He calls himself a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa! Let T— initiate him. * * He had never even met Sri Ramakrishna in his life, and yet a disciple!—What impudence! Without an unbroken chain of discipleship—गुरुपरम्परा—nothing can be done, is it a child's play? To have no connection whatsoever and call oneself a disciple! The idiot! If that boy refuses to go on in the right way, turn him out. Nothing, I say, can be done without the chain of discipleship, that is, the power that is transmitted from the Guru to the disciple, and from him to his disciple, and so on.

Here he comes — is it temporary? — is it permanent? — is it somebody calling himself a brother-disciple of mine. I have now a suspicion that it is that boy. To pose as a brother-disciple! He feels humiliated to call himself a disciple, I daresay, and would fain turn a Guru straightway! Turn him out if he does not follow the established procedure.

Talking of the restlessness of —'s mind, it all means that he has got no work to do. * * Go from village to village, do good to humanity and to the world at large. Go to hell yourself to buy salvation for others. There is no Mukti on earth to call my own. Whenever you think of yourself, you are bound to feel restless. What business have you to do with Peace, my boy? You have renounced everything. Come! Now is the turn for you to banish the desire for Peace, and that for Mukti too! Don't worry in the least; heaven or hell, or Bhakti or Mukti,—don't care for anything, but go, my boy, and spread the name of the Lord from door to door! It is only by doing good to others that one attains to his own good, and it is by leading others to Bhakti and Mukti that one attains them himself. Take that up, forget your own self for it, be mad over the idea. As Sri Ramakrishna used to love you, as I love you, come, love the world like that. Bring all together. Where is G—? You must have him with you. My infinite love to him. Where is S—? Let him join if he likes. Call him:

in my name. Remember these few points:—

1. We are Sannyasins, who have given up *everything*—Bhakti, and Mukti, and enjoyment, and all.

2. To do the highest good to the world, every-one down to the lowest—this is our vow. Welcome Mukti or hell, whichever comes of it.

3. Ramakrishna Paramahansa came for the good of the world. Call him a man, or God, or an Incarnation, just as you please. Accept him each in your own light.

4. He who will bow before him will be converted into purest gold that very moment. Go with this message from door to door, if you can, my boy, and all your disquietude will be at an end. Never fear,—where's the room for fear?—Caring for nothing whatsoever is a part of your life. You have so long spread his name and your character all around, well and good. Now spread them in an organised way. The Lord is with you. Take heart!

Whether I live or die, whether I go back to India or not, you go on spreading love, love that knows no bounds. Put S—, too, to this task. But remember one needs weapons to overcome others. "समिधिने वरं त्यागो विनाशे निबध्ने सति"—When death is so certain, it is better to die for a good cause.

Yours affly.

Vivekananda.

P. S. Remember my previous letter—we want both men and women. There is no distinction of

sex in the soul. It won't do merely to
Ramakrishna an Incarnation, you must manifest
power. Where are —? Tell them to spread
these ideas. We want thousands of men, and
thousands of women, who will spread like wild
fire from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from the
North Pole to the South Pole—all over the world.
It is no use indulging in child's play—neither is
there time for it. Let those who have come for
child's play be off now, while there is time, or they
will surely come to grief. We want an organisa-
tion. Off with laziness. Spread! Spread! Run
like fire to all places. Do not depend upon me.
Whether I live or die, go on spreading, yourselves.

Yours affly,

Vivekananda.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

1895.

Dear and beloved,

I have now got lots of newspapers etc. and you
need not send any more. Let the movement now
confine itself to India. * *

It isn't much use getting up a sensation every
day. But avail yourselves of this stir that is rife
all over the country, and scatter yourselves in all
quarters. In other words, try to start branches at
different places. Let it not be an empty sound
merely. You must join the Madrasees and start

associations etc. at different places. What about the magazine which I heard was going to be started? Why are you nervous about conducting it? * * Come! Do something heroic. Brother, what if you do not attain Mukti, what if you suffer damnation a few times? Is the saying untrue—

“नमसि वन्दसि कश्चि पुरुषपीयूषपूर्णः।

विभुवनमुपकारयेत्प्रीतिभिः प्रीयमानः।

परयुक्तपरमायुं वर्षसीकृत्य केचित्।

निजहृदि विकसन्तः सन्ति सन्तः कितन्तः ॥”

—There are some saints who full of holiness in thought, word, and deed, please the whole world by their numerous beneficent acts, and who develop their own hearts by magnifying an atom of virtue in others as if it were as great as a mountain.

What if you don't get Mukti? What childish prattle! Lord! They say, even the venom of a snake loses its power by firmly denying it. Isn't it true? What queer humility is this to say, 'I know nothing!' 'I am nothing!' This is pseudo-renunciation and mock-modesty, I tell you. Off with such a self-debasing spirit! 'If I do not know, who on earth does! What have you been doing so long, if you now plead ignorance? These are the words of an atheist,—the humility of a vagabond wretch. We can do everything, and will do everything! He who is fortunate enough will heroically join us, letting the worthless mew like cats from their corner. — writes, "Well, you have had enough of blazoning. Now come back home." I would have called — a man if he could build a house and

call me. Ten years' experience of such things has made me wiser. I am no more to be duped by words. Let him who has courage in his mind and love in his heart come with me, I want none else. Through Mother's grace, single-handed I am worth a hundred thousand now and will be worth two millions. * * There is no certainty about my going back to India. I shall have to lead a wandering life there also, as I am doing here. But here one lives in the company of scholars, and there one must live among fools—there is this difference as of the poles. People of this country organise and work, while *our* undertakings all come to dust clashing against laziness—miscalled 'renunciation'—and jealousy etc. — writes me big letters now and then, half of which I cannot decipher, which is a blessing to me. For a great part of the news is of the following description—that in such and such place such and such a man was speaking ill of me, and that he, being unable to bear the same, had a quarrel with him, and so forth. Many thanks for his kind defence of me. But what seriously hinders me from listening to what particular people may be saying about me is—"स्वल्पं कालो बहुधा विनाः"—Time is short, but the obstacles are many. * *

An organised society is wanted. Let — look to the household management, — take charge of money matters and marketing, and — act as secretary, that is, carry on correspondence etc. Make a permanent centre,—it is no use making random

efforts as you are doing now. Do you see my point? I have quite a heap of newspapers, now I want you to do something. If you can build a Math, I shall say you are heroes; otherwise you are nothing. Consult the Madras people when you work. They have a great capacity for work. Celebrate this year's Sri Ramakrishna Festival with such eclat as to make it a record. The less the feeding propaganda is, the better. It is enough if you have hand-to-hand distribution of the Prasada. * *

I am going to write a very short sketch of Sri Ramakrishna's life in English, which I shall send you. Have it printed and translated into Bengali and sell it at the Festival,—people do not read books that are distributed free. Fix some nominal price. Have the Festival done with great pomp. * *

You must have an all-sided intellect to do efficient work. In any towns or villages you may visit, start an association wherever you find a number of people revering Sri Ramakrishna. Have you travelled through so many villages all for nothing? We must slowly absorb the Hari Sabhas and such other associations. Well, I cannot tell you all,—if I could but get another demon like me! The Lord will supply me everything in time. * * If one has got power, he must manifest it in action. * * Off with your ideas of Mukti and Bhakti! There is only one way in the world,—
 “बोधकारणं हि वसां जीवितं,” “बरायें प्राज्ञ उत्सृजेत्।”—The

good live for others alone. The wise man should sacrifice himself for others. I can secure my own good only by doing your good. There is no other way, none whatsoever. * * You are God, I am God, and man is God. It is this God manifested through humanity who is doing everything in this world. Is there a different God sitting high up somewhere? To work, therefore !

B— has sent me a book written by S— * * From a perusal of that work B— has come to know that all the people of this world are impure and that they are by their very nature debarred from having a jot of religion; that only the handful of Brāhmanas that are in India have the sole right to it, and among these again, S— and B— are the sun and moon, so to speak. Bravo! What a powerful religion indeed! In Bengal specially, that sort of a religion is very easy to practise. There is no easier way than that. The whole truth about austerities and spiritual exercises is, in a nutshell, that I am pure and all the rest are impure! A beastly, demoniac, hellish religion this! If the American people are unfit for religion, if it is improper to preach religion here, why then ask their help? * * What can remedy such a disease? Well, tell S— to go to Malabar. The Raja there has taken his subjects' land and offered it at the feet of Brāhmanas. There are big monasteries in every village, where sumptuous dinners are given, supplemented by presents in cash. * * There is no harm in touching the

its divine nature more and more is *good*, every action that retards it is *evil*.

The only way of getting our divine nature manifested is by helping others do the same.

If there is inequality in nature, still there must be equal chance for all—or if greater for some and for some less—the weaker should be given more chance than the strong.

In other words, a Brahmana is not so much in need of education as a Chandāla. If the son of a Brahmana needs one teacher, that of a Chandāla needs ten. For, greater help must be given to him whom nature has not endowed with acute intellect from birth. It is a mad man who carries coals to Newcastle. The poor, the down-trodden, the ignorant, let these be your God.

A dreadful slough is in front of you—take care ; many fall into it and die. The slough is this, that the present religion of the Hindus is not in the Vedas, nor in the Puranas, nor in Bhakti, nor in Mukti—religion has entered into the cooking-pot. The present religion of the Hindus is neither the path of Knowledge nor that of Reason,—it is “Don’t-touchism.”—“Don’t touch me !” “Don’t touch me !”—that exhausts its description. See that you do not lose your lives in this dire irreligion of “Don’t-touchism.” Must the teaching **आत्मवत्सर्वभूतेषु**—“Looking upon all beings as your own self”—be confined to books alone? How will they grant salvation who cannot feed a hungry mouth with a crumb of bread? How will those

who become impure at the mere breath of others, purify others? Don't-touchism is a form of mental disease. Beware! All expansion is life; all contraction is death. All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is dying. Therefore love for love's sake, because it is the only law of life, just as you breathe to live. This the secret of selfless love, selfless action and the rest. * * Try to help S— if you can, in any way. He is a very good and pious man, but is of a narrow heart. It does not fall to the lot of all to feel for the misery of others. Good Lord! Of all Incarnations Lord Chaitanya was the greatest, but he was comparatively lacking in Knowledge; in the Ramakrishna Incarnation there is Knowledge, Devotion and Love—infinite Knowledge, infinite Love, infinite Work, infinite Compassion for all beings. You have not yet been able to understand him. “श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित्”—Even learning about Him, most people do not understand Him. What the whole Hindu race has thought in ages, he *lived* in one life. His life is the living commentary to the *Vedas* of all nations. People will come to know him by degrees. My old watchword—struggle, struggle up to light! Onward!

Yours in service,

Vivekananda.

C/o E. T. Sturdy Esq.,
High View, &c.
1896.

Beloved Akhandananda,

I am glad to go through the contents of your letter. Your idea is grand but our nation is totally lacking in the faculty of organisation. It is this one drawback which produces all sorts of evil. We are altogether averse to making a common cause for anything. The first requisite for organisation is obedience. I do a little bit of work when I feel so disposed, and then let it go to the dogs,—this kind of work is of no avail. We must have plodding industry and perseverance. Keep a regular correspondence, I mean, make it a point to write to me every month, or twice a month, what work you are doing, and what has been its outcome. We want here (in England) a Sannyasin well versed in English and Sanskrit. I shall soon go to America again, and he is to work here in my absence. Except S— and R— I find no one else for this task. I have sent money to S— and written to him to start at once. I have requested Rajaji that his Bombay agent may help S— in embarking. I forgot to write,—but if you can take the trouble to do it, please send through S— a bag of *mung*, gram, and *arhar dāl*, also a little of the spice called *methi*. Please convey my love to Pandit Narayan Das, Mr. Sankar Lal, Ojhaji, Doctor, and all. Do you think you can get the medicine for G—'s eyes here?—Everywhere

you find patent medicines, which are all humbug. Please give my blessings to him, and to the other boys. J— has founded a certain society at Meerut and wants to work conjointly with us. By the bye, he has got a certain paper too; send K— there, and let him start a Meerut centre, if he can, and try that the paper may be in Hindi. I shall help a little now and then. I shall send some money when K— goes to Meerut and reports to me exactly as matters stand. Try to open a centre at Ajmere. * * Pandit Agnihotri has started some Society at Saharanpur. They wrote to me a letter. Please keep correspondence with them. Live on friendly terms with all. Work! Work! Go on opening centres in this way. We have them already in Calcutta and Madras, and it will be excellent if you can start new ones at Meerut and Ajmere. Go on slowly starting centres at different places like that. Here all my letters etc. are to be addressed to C/o E. T. Sturdy Esq., High View, Caversham, Reading, England, and those for America, C/o Miss Phillips, 19 W. 38 Street, New York. By degrees we must spread the world over. The first thing needed is obedience. You must be ready to plunge into fire—then will work be done. * * Form societies like that at different villages in Rajputana. There you have a hint.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

[*Extracts from a letter to an English disciple.*]

Switzerland, 1896.

The whole world is child's play, preaching, teaching and all included. "Know him to be the Sannyasin who neither hates nor desires." What is to be desired in this little mud-puddle of an earth with its ever-recurring misery, disease and death? "He who has given up all desires, he alone is happy."

In this beautiful spot, in this rest and eternal peacefulness, I am now catching a glimpse of it. * * Even of those that are struggling hard, few ever reach the goal, for the senses are powerful: they drag him down. * * "A good world!" "A happy world!" "Social progress," are equally intelligible with "hot ice," "dark light," etc. If it were good it would not be the world. The soul foolishly thinks of manifesting the Infinite in finite matter—the intelligence in gross particles, and at last finds out its error and tries to escape. This going back is the beginning of religion and its method, destruction of self—that is love. Not love for wife or child, or anybody else, but love for everything else except the little self.

Never be deluded by the foolish talk of which you will hear a lot in the world, about "human progress" and such stuff. There is no progress, if not digression. In our society there are one set of evils, in some other,—another. So with periods of

history. In the middle ages there were more robbers, now, more cheats : at one period there is less idea of married life, in another more prostitution : in one, more physical agony, in another, a thousand-fold more mental.

So with knowledge! Did not gravitation and all the "ologies" and "isms" exist already in Nature? What difference does it make to know that they exist? Are you happier than the Red Indians? The only knowledge to have is to know that it is all humbug—but few, very few will ever know that! "Know the Atman alone and give up all other vain words." This is the only knowledge we gain after this knowledge about the Universe — this is the only work,—to call upon mankind to "Awake, arise, and stop not till the goal is reached." It is renunciation that is meant by religion, nothing else! Tyaga!

Swami Vivekananda.





